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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS  
AT A  
NEW CRISIS

14 JANUARY 1963

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MEMORANDUM: Sino-Soviet Relations at a New Crisis

1. The conjunction of the Cuban crisis, the Sino-Indian border war, and Tito's visit to the USSR have led to a rapid intensification of the Sino-Soviet struggle. The mutual denunciations have taken the two parties a long step toward public and explicit accusations of heresy which would mark the end of any pretense at unity. They are nearer to such a rupture than at any time, and avoiding the definitive step of open condemnation is increasingly difficult. With or without this step, however, we believe that the entire relationship is bound to deteriorate further, and only the pace of this process is in question.

The Current Status

2. The dispute seems to be gaining a momentum of its own. Each new clash of polemics is sharper and more extensive than the last. Both sides feel compelled to attack and defend with increasing vigor. The Chinese had begun to unfold a new ideological attack on Soviet policy even before the Cuban and Sino-Indian crisis, but these latter developments led Peiping to carry the argument beyond previous levels; the Cuban affair opened up a great Soviet vulnerability, while the Sino-Indian conflict found the USSR "neutral," a position which, among Communists, is hardly distinguishable from hostility. Peiping wrapped up its indictment in two fundamental critiques, published on 15 and 31 December, designed to leave the impression that the Soviets had sold out the international revolution. Meanwhile, the Soviets have themselves gone over to the offensive in speeches by Khrushchev and by his spokesmen at a series of party congresses in Eastern Europe. The latest and most thorough Soviet counter attack appeared in Pravda on 7 January.

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3. In the current exchange, the basic doctrinal arguments have not changed.\* What is new is the openness with which each side treats the possibility of a formal rupture. Both refer frequently to "splitting" activities and the "organizational" consequences of a trend toward "fragmentation." A highly significant article by Gromyko on 4 December used an historical analogy from the 1920's to warn against naive illusions that such a break could not take place; the dispute, he implied, "continues, develops and goes further." Pravda's long editorial of 7 January warned that "divisive activities" could not be tolerated because they would lead to a "minority trend" in the movement and "then to the emergence of the danger of a split...." For their part, the Chinese warned that if the Soviets continued their activities in condemning China they would be moving "further and further along the road toward a split." They even went beyond this to cite Lenin's precedent when he broke with the majority of the international movement in order to preserve the purity of the ideology. Thus both parties are maneuvering to place the onus for a split on the other, and to prepare the best possible record against this day.

4. The ideological conflict between the two Communist parties and the divergence of national policies between the two governments are already so fundamental that for most practical purposes a "split" has already occurred. From the viewpoint of most of the rest of the world, the USSR and China are now two separate powers whose interests conflict on almost every major issue. The issues in conflict are not merely tactical: the Soviets and Chinese can no longer agree on a common line of political guidance for the international movement, nor concert a common policy against the non-Communist world.

#### Some Implications

5. Whatever happens next, it is likely that the two other Communist states in Asia, North Korea and

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\*A representative sampling of contrasting Chinese and Soviet views on key issues is set forth in attachment.

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North Vietnam, will be key areas for new moves by both sides. The position of these states is of the greatest importance, for the adherence of North Korea and perhaps North Vietnam to the Chinese camp would mean more than the defection or expulsion of one or two more separate parties judged heretical by the USSR. It would mean the splitting of the Communist structure on territorial lines with the Chinese heading a rival Bloc in a commanding position in the Far East and Southeast Asia.

6. Soviet tolerance of North Korea's support for China seems to be ending. Although there have been continued military deliveries to Korea, including newer types of equipment, it is likely that the Soviets have begun to use Korean military requirements as a lever for political concessions. A North Korean military delegation went to Moscow on 29 November but departed abruptly and apparently without any new commitments. Almost immediately thereafter, the North Koreans hardened their support for China at the Czech Party Congress and were openly censured for it. Subsequently the North Korean party issued a defiant Central Committee statement stressing the importance of strengthening their military position, on the basis of "self-reliance."

7. The North Vietnamese are being assiduously cultivated by both sides. The Soviets have recently been investing considerable time and energy in cultivating General Giap, on whom they may count for support in Hanoi. Giap's stay in the USSR this summer has been followed by a visit to Hanoi of General Batov, the Deputy Chief of the Warsaw Pact. This has been followed by the departure for Hanoi of the Soviet official charged with Bloc Communist party relations. The Chinese have greatly increased their verbal support for the liberation movement in South Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh, who is probably personally sympathetic to the Soviet Union, has managed to maintain a neutral stand, but this is likely to become an increasingly complex position for the North Vietnamese leaders. The danger for the West in this situation is that Moscow may feel it necessary to compete with China by offering more support to the operations in South Vietnam.

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8. The worsening of the dispute is apparently becoming a factor in the Cuban situation. One Cuban paper, usually identified with Fidel, published the complete text of the highly provocative Chinese editorial of 15 December, while another Cuban paper of lesser importance published the text of the 7 January Pravda reply. Castro took note of the "discrepancies" in the Bloc in his public statement of 2 January and urged a new try at unity. At this stage in the dispute, such acts of apparent neutrality are, in Soviet eyes, tantamount to gestures of support for the Chinese. One reliable source has indicated that, although the Cuban leaders are sympathetic to Soviet views "in general," Havana will remain officially neutral out of pique over Khrushchev's behavior and in order to demonstrate the independent and special position of Cuba. It is likely that Castro's stand in Sino-Soviet matters will add to current frictions with Moscow, but neither the Soviets nor the Cubans can afford to abandon their public commitments of solidarity.

9. The preoccupation of Moscow with the dispute is evident, and the sharp turn for the worse in the past weeks probably has reinforced Khrushchev's preference for a quiet period in East-West relations in the wake of the Cuban setback. Numerous Soviet spokesmen have privately implied that no movement on East-West questions could take place while Bloc affairs were in their present tense state. Gromyko in his article of 4 December, went somewhat further and hinted that when a break with China might be developing, it was prudent to consolidate relations with the West, or at least to cease "attacks" on the West.

#### The Outlook

10. Recriminations are likely to continue and may even reach a new level at the East German party congress (15-19 January.) Khrushchev will lead the Soviet delegation, and he is backed by key Soviet officials who deal with the intricacies of Sino-Soviet polemics. Khrushchev is likely to follow the hard line of Pravda on 7 January. The presence of the Yugoslavs in an important Communist party gathering for the first time since 1948 is bound to provide ample provocation to the Chinese who have consistently and bitterly attacked Tito and Soviet rapprochement with him. At a minimum, the Chinese will reply in

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kind to whatever denunciations they receive from Ulbricht and Khrushchev. In the present tense situation this could mean the long-awaited public condemnations.

11. At bottom, and in the long run, it probably is not crucial whether the Soviets and Chinese explicitly part company or formally remain partners. Their diverging interests and conceptions are basic and will persist in either case. Rival proselytizing will go on, either within the existing international movement or between two competing movements. The two powers will in their foreign policies pursue their own national interests, clashing or cooperating as these may dictate. The normal laws of politics, in other words, will continue to prevail over the myths and definitions of Marxism-Leninism.

12. But these myths and definitions are not without their significance, for they still have a strong hold on the minds of Communists. All concerned regard it as a fateful move to take the step of public denunciation which has historically been the decisive move in quarrels of this magnitude. The tortured effort to condemn by implication indicates that, for Communists everywhere, this would be an important ritual act. Even though the consequences of a rupture are working themselves out in practice anyway, the formal admission of rupture would dramatize and sharply intensify these strains. Inside various parties, fragile compromises which might withstand a more gradual disintegration at the core of the movement could be wrecked in the factional forces loosed by an acknowledged split.

13. In addition to the organizational consequences, there will be important political and psychological ramifications for Communists as well as non-Communists. The failure to maintain even a minimal unity would be a tremendous blow to the self-confidence of Communists and to their belief in the efficacy and infallibility of their doctrine. It would suggest that both China and Russia placed their national interests above the international movement. The existence of two rival centers of

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power would probably be reflected throughout the movement. New parties would appear. Some parties would be opportunist and bargain away their allegiance. Other parties would move toward an independent position. Initially the Soviets would retain a vast numerical superiority, but over the long run the Chinese may gain strength in undeveloped areas, and particularly in Asia. Some parties would be paralyzed by internal dissensions, and gradually lose public political support and appeal. Many of these consequences are occurring throughout the movement already, but the formal proclamations of disunity would serve to aggravate these tensions and accelerate the trend toward diversity and polycentrism.

14. Throughout the dispute, a decline in Sino-Soviet state relations has paralleled the worsening of ideological argument. Diplomatic contacts have steadily been constricted, economic relations have been substantially reduced and the Chinese have had to forfeit most Soviet assistance for their military programs. This trend is likely to continue as part of the larger political deterioration, although diplomatic relations would probably be maintained even in the face of a collapse of formal unity. The public military alliance between the two countries probably would not be openly repudiated, but this is not really a key question. Already, neither side can consider treaty obligations as an important element in future calculations; each recognizes that, in crises which raise the possibility of nuclear war, for example in the Taiwan Strait, neither can expect its "ally" to expose itself to major military risks unless the "ally" itself feels its vital interests to be threatened. However, the Soviets would probably continue to believe that the preservation of some kind of Communist regime in China was of vital interest to them. They would hope that this regime under new leadership would purge itself eventually of its present heresies. But in all matters short of survival, China and the USSR will increasingly view each other as hostile rivals and competing powers.

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ATTACHMENT

A SAMPLING OF CONTRASTING SOVIET AND CHINESE  
COMMUNIST POSITIONS ON KEY DOCTRINAL ISSUES

Chinese Positions

Soviet Positions

The Balance of Power

"Basing himself on the Marxist-Leninist theory of the class struggle,...Mao Tse-tung has summed up...that imperialism and all reactionaries are paper tigers, powerful only in appearance, in reality inwardly weak..., and thus not terrifying at all...By opposing this Marxist-Leninist thesis ..., the modern revisionists reveal themselves as completely ignorant of revolutionary dialectics and distrustful of the strength of revolutionary peoples..."--Red Flag, 4 January.

"The 'paper tiger' definition of imperialism speaks only of its weaknesses... What we need are not paper definitions,...but a genuine analysis...Marxism-Leninism teaches us to approach the enemy with a sober estimate of prospects and actual forces...The world Communist movement is well aware that imperialism is on the decline ..., but it is also aware that it has atomic fangs, to which it may resort....--Pravda, 7 January.

War and the Cuban Crisis

"Imperialism always tries to intimidate the people with the weapons at its disposal, but, whatever the weapons may be, they cannot alter imperialism's fatal weakness of being divorced from the people... The factor that decides the destiny of humanity has never been any weapon, but always the masses of people ... Imperialism's use of nuclear weapons to intimidate people...can never intimidate the masses..., /but only/ the modern revisionists ...cringing before the might of imperialism and disseminating fear of imperialism..." --Red Flag, 4 January.

"The most important thing in the struggle for peace is... to avert war... This is particularly necessary in view of the unprecedented destructive force of modern weapons ... Such a war would bring death and suffering to hundreds of millions of people ... In contrast, ...the dogmatists emphasize that nuclear war is not to be feared, that modern weapons are monstrous only 'in the opinion of imperialists and reactionaries,' that 'the atom bomb is a paper tiger'..."--Pravda, 7 January.

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## Chinese Positions

## Soviet Positions

### War and the Cuban Crisis (Continued)

"What we have strongly opposed, what we still strongly oppose and will strongly oppose in the future, is the sacrifice of another country's sovereignty as a means of reaching a compromise with imperialism. A compromise of this sort can only be regarded as 100 per cent appeasement, a 'Munich' pure and simple..."--People's Daily, 31 December. "A political leader must know how to distinguish compromises that are permissible from those compromises that are impermissible and are an expression of treachery..."--Red Flag, 4 January.

"The postwar years have not witnessed a more acute international crisis...than the recent crisis...in the Caribbean...The firm and flexible policy of the Soviet Government..., which prevented a thermonuclear catastrophe, is highly assessed by grateful mankind... Now that the crest of the crisis is behind..., the 'leftist phrasemongers' are trying to present the case slanderously, as if the Soviet Union had capitulated to imperialism and had even agreed to a 'second Munich'..." --Pravda, 7 January.

### "Peaceful Coexistence"

"Those who attack the Chinese Communist party...are opposed to relying on the masses and their struggles. They want the people of the world...to place their hopes for world peace on 'mutual conciliation,' 'mutual concessions,' 'mutual accommodation,' and 'sensible compromises' with imperialism..." --People's Daily, 31 December.

The Cuban crisis "was settled on the basis of mutual concessions and sensible compromise. The solution of disputed questions between states without wars, by peaceful means--this is precisely the policy of peaceful coexistence in action." --Pravda, 7 January.

### The "Liberation" Movements

"The socialist countries...must resolutely support wars of national liberation and people's revolutionary wars. In branding this correct view of ours as 'warlike,' those who attack the CCP are placing the struggle in defense of world peace in opposition to the national liberation movements,... They are opposed to revolution by oppressed nations and peoples, and demand that these nations and

"The entire activity of the Soviet state, of the CPSU, in the international arena is the practical struggle against imperialism..., for rendering real assistance to the peoples who are defending freedom and fighting for freedom. The broad support of the liberation struggle of the Algerian people..., the defense...of the people of Laos, the support of India and

Chinese PositionsSoviet PositionsThe "Liberation" Movements (Continued)

peoples should abandon their revolutionary struggles and forever submit to the dark rule and enslavement of imperialism and reaction... To take the stand of fearing revolution, of opposing revolution, results in setbacks and defeats for the national liberation movements..." --People's Daily, 31 January.

Indonesia..., the all-out assistance to the consolidation of the independent states of Asia, Africa, and Latin America--are but a few facts which show how consistently the Soviet Union fights...for the national liberation of peoples ... Our country's actions in international organizations... help to rally all progressive forces in defense of national liberation movements..." --Pravda, 7 January.

Building Communism

"Chen Yi said that China had made great progress in science and technology under the guidance of the three red banners of the general line, the great leap forward, and the people's communes. Now, he said, we can declare confidently that by relying mainly on our own efforts, ...all scientific and technical problems in China's economic construction and national defense can be solved..."--People's Daily, 5 January.

"Unwillingness to make use of the experience of fraternal countries and political withdrawal are greatly harming the Communist cause and hindering the construction of socialism. Economic autarchy and national reticence are inadmissible, particularly because we are not building socialism and Communism in a vacuum but under conditions of competition and struggle between two systems..."--Problems of Peace and Socialism, January 1963.

Authority and Discipline

"The principles governing the relations between fraternal parties... laid down in the Moscow Declaration grant no right whatsoever to any party, big or small, to launch at its own congress an attack on another fraternal party. If such an erroneous practice is accepted, then one party...can attack this party today and that party tomorrow..."--People's Daily, 15 December.

"At the 22nd CPSU congress and the congresses of Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy and Czechoslovakia, the delegations of the Chinese Communist party claimed that it was a mistake to openly criticize the line of the Albanian leaders and tried to place on the fraternal parties the responsibility for the differences

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Chinese Positions

Soviet Positions

The "Liberation" Movements (Continued)

"Those who accuse the CCP of... the error of so-called 'nationalism' ...themselves have violated the principles governing relations among fraternal parties and fraternal countries..., have followed the wrong practice of nationalism and great-nation chauvinism..." --People's Daily, 15 December.

"Some people have said: 'We are the majority and you are the minority. Therefore, we are creative Marxist-Leninists and you are dogmatists; we are in the right and you are in the wrong. But...such questions as who is right and who is wrong...cannot be determined by who is in the majority or minority at a given moment... At the time of the Second International, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were in the minority..., but truth proved to be on the side of Lenin and the Bolsheviks... All those who dare to uphold truth are never afraid of being in the minority for the time being... We will never submit ourselves to the dictates of any anti-Marxist-Leninist bludgeon...' --People's Daily, 15 December.

which had arisen. But to make such contentions means to go against irrefutable facts, to absolve of responsibility those who are in fact fighting against a common line of the Marxist-Leninist parties..."--Pravda, 7 January.

"The disease of leftist sectarianism is fed by nationalism, and in turn feeds nationalism. As shown by experience, it becomes particularly intolerable when it manifests itself in the activities of a party in power..." --Pravda, 7 January.

"Communists cannot but feel gravely concerned over the thesis advanced recently that there is a 'temporary majority' in the world Communist movement which 'persists in its mistakes' and a 'temporary minority' which 'boldly and resolutely upholds the truth.' To insist on this thesis would in effect mean to lead matters to fragmentation of the international communist movement... This contention is especially harmful in that it is associated with the incredible pretension of proclaiming one party the true heir of Lenin... Lenin was in favor of recognizing international proletarian discipline..." --Pravda, 7 January.

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